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"WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TODAY."

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## CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

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The body of the church is to have knowledge of the offenders crime fully, and the full proof thereof as of plain matter of fact; and after mature deliberate consideration, and consulting the word of God, whether the offender be present or absent, the minister or elder puts the question to the whole church whether they judge the person guilty of such crime now proved against him, to be worthy of the censure of the church for the same? To which the members in general give their judgment; which, if it be in the affirmative, then the judgment of the members in general being had, or the majority of them, the pastor, minister, or elder, sums up the sentence of the church, etc., and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the presence of the congregation, and by and with the consent, and according to the judicial sentence of the church, cuts off and excommunicates such an offender by name.

The foregoing from the pen of such an exegete as Alex. Campbell deserves our most respectful consideration. Every pastor, minister, Elder, Deacon, and member of the church should try at least to be sufficiently intelligent for self government. Every Christian is bound by the principles and practices of the Christian religion to be loyal to the church in all matters affecting its government, and always show due respect to its decisions. The brethren should never allow themselves to fall so far from grace as to espouse the cause of an excluded offender and give aid and comfort to the rascal, or the liar, or the seditioner, or those who have been excluded for any transgression of God's positive law. The scripture says "from such withdraw yourselves." They may be admonished as brethren and advised and if possible brought to repentance, but until repentance and reformation take place, they have no right to officiate at or partake of the communion; and he who knowingly takes the communion from the hands of such, becomes himself, in the true sense of law, an aider and abettor, and a partaker in the sin of such a guilty party. In the general management of the church there is the wise administration of Divine and positive law and practice; and also the law of expediency. To some it seems difficult to see where the first ceases and the second begins; to others, it is a question whether the second obtains at all or not, every scientific thinker will be able to see that the bible, the great repository of Divine truth, is primarily the constitution of the Christian religion. The law of expediency is the realm of privilege and necessity, hence all operations and co-operations of the church must come under this head, and must be in all cases constitutional; that is, nothing can be done by the vote or consent of the church that contravenes its constitution. This is a well known principle whenever constitutional government obtains,

And hence we appeal to our great constitutional lawyers for guidance in the passage of legislative acts, to see that they do not infringe the constitution. How long would the government of this country stand without its acts of expediency; and again how long could it stand without its constitution? These are the two legs upon which as a nation we walk. Without either we are crippled, and if we go at all it is but a poor miserable hobble at best. By way of digression I would here observe that these are two Divine principles ordained of God, and if you doubt it read Col. 1:16 where Paul says he created thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. He did not evidently set up all the wicked rules of earth. He is neither conservative nor Reformer, Whig or Tory, Democrat or Republican, but has ordained the underlying constitutional principle, upon which all governments exist, and which governments get out of joint with this constitutional principle, they are out of line with God. No man has a right to vote upon any article of faith. One brother in the church can upset the vote of the whole church on the ground of unconstitutionality. Convention or compromise of God's truth is an abomination unto the Lord. The man who dared to do this under the law incurred the penalty of death, and under the new dispensation we are to mark them that cause division contrary to the doctrine, —contrary to the constitution. This is a sinful act in the sight of the great, wise, pure Judge of all the earth. The law of expediency could not of necessity be reduced to special precepts. The manners, customs, modes of operation, laws, and education, of different ages and nations, made it an expedient with God in harmony with law, not to interfere with the statement that man was to subdue the earth; man then being left to the operation of the law of expediency, guarded by the constitution, can operate this law with perfect safety to the church, so long as no divine principle is infringed. A child may be born according to the law of natural generation. It may be nourished up by the great constitutional principles that build up and develop the constituent or component parts of a physical development, but not without the expediency of law. To it down with hands and strictures, keep it in the lap of the mother, cradle it without this law, and it knows not a single expedient by which to sustain life. It would appear that God kept this law in full view and never infringed it in regard to his operations toward man. There is therefore the law of the Lord which is perfect, converting the soul, and there is the law of expediency, and these two laws are each component parts of a great whole. As expediency appropriates physical law and makes it subservient to the purposes of life, and administer to all our temporal wants, so also revealed law opens the way to our spiritual nature and invites and beckons us on into a still higher and grander field, the promised

land, the haven of rest, the eternal home of our spiritual nature. By the law of expediency we appropriate the law of redemption and justification, and feed spiritually on the manna of everlasting life. There is both precedent and example in Divine revelation that this law does and can exist without contravention or infringement of truth. Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16, 3), "because of the Jews" for they knew all that his father was a Greek. This was both lawful and expedient yet no contravention of the gospel. Paul and Barnabas differed on a matter of expediency, Acts 15, 37-39, Barnabas thinking it expedient to take John Mark with them to visit the churches and Paul thought it not good because he departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. There was no breach of church fellowship or communion although they had a sharp contention, and as the vote was a tie between them, they separated each following, what seemed to him, most expedient. Had it been otherwise the vote of majority should have made it expedient that the minority should submit themselves unto the other and so fulfil the law of love. After Paul's return to Jerusalem, having visited, and preached to the Gentiles, (Acts 21, 20th to the 30th verses), his brethren advised him to take four men that had a vow and purify himself "with them, and be at charges with them that they may shave their heads; and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing; but that thou thyself walkest orderly and keptest the law." In this case there was a majority against Paul who thought it expedient to appease the prejudice of the Jews and he submitted himself to their ordinance and went through the ceremonial purification, not because he believed there was either salvation or condemnation in it but to show the Jewish brethren that he believed, that the report they had heard was false. He had not told the Jews who were among the gentiles they must not circumcise their children the eighth day, nor had he tried to make them forsake Moses. It was not expedient to do this. If a Jew believed in Christ, repented of his sins, confessed Christ was baptised into him and kept his laws in the new kingdom, Paul did not care how much or how little of the law of Moses he kept besides, or how much or how little he was in love with Moses so long as the Gospel was not contravened; but with the gentile convert it was quite different. Having never been under the law they were not to be troubled about it, "save that they were to keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication. This is true discipline ground. It has a still unknown to the gods or ecclesiasticians.

It furnishes a background upon which the great catholic principles of the Christian religion stand out in bold relief causing every narrow contracted soul or system of religion to dwindle into utter insignificance as the glow worm before the noon-day sun. It is in keeping with the declaration that our religion is for all people, kindred, and tongues. It is broad enough for the broadest minded man that ever lived or ever will live. We hope and pray deliverance from the rule of narrow-mindedness in the church, when men that wear number ten boots, and number six hats demand that their brethren shall swell their feet and shrink their heads to fit their capacity. If one that is called a brother hold erroneous opinions so much the worse for him, and so much the more good has he of the teaching of the church. The church is broad enough to welcome all men into its fold, who can come in through the law of redemption, notwithstanding they bring many errors, of early education, with them. The inside of the church is the school of Christ where the disciple or learner may have many of his errors uprooted and rich truths planted instead. We have now to cite one case of contradiction of the scriptural law, and our contention is complete. Paul withstood Peter to the face at Antioch because he was to be blamed, (Gal. 2, 11). "Before, that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." (Gal. 2, 12.) Now the Jews had a law that prevented them from going in and eating or having dealings with Gentiles or uncircumcised persons. The believing Jews at Jerusalem had charged Peter with a violation of this law at the time he went in unto Cornelius (Acts 11, 3,) and Peter vindicated his conduct before the brethren by rehearsing his vision that showed that the Gentiles were no longer to be accounted common or unclean. When however, his Jewish brethren came down from Jerusalem and found him and Barnabas and others of the circumcision at Antioch, Peter and all of them dissembled and acted towards their Gentile brethren as though they were unclean and withdrew themselves. This, says Paul, "was not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel." It was leading the Jews to believe the law superior to the Gospel. It was building, again, the things that Peter had destroyed. It was a contravention, of the Gospel, a violation of the constitution of the new kingdom; and hence both unlawful and inexpedient. In the case of Paul observing the Jewish purification and "entering into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." (Acts 21, 26.) It was both lawful and expedient, lawful because he compromised no principle of the Gospel to make place for the law, and expedient because while harmless it might turn the hearts of the Jews towards him and open a door for the preaching of the Gospel. Having fully demonstrated the existence of two great laws that must always run parallel and never intersect each other,

we conclude that we may as a people do "whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report" (Phil. 4, 8, N. E.) and whatever things are expedient, must be in harmony with these things. Alexander Campbell in speaking of the law of expediency (Page 95 Christian System.) After referring to "the safe keeping of the apostolic writings, the multiplication of copies, the translation of them into different languages" \* \* \* distribution, copies, paper-makers, printers, book-binders, vendor, &c., says:—"Next to these are meetings, houses, baptisteries, Lord's tables, the emblematic loaf and cup, times of convocation, arrangements for the day, &c., &c., Acts of Parliament, decrees of synods and councils, but no apostolic enactments, statutes, or laws are found for any of these important items. There is neither precept nor precedent in the New Testament for building, hiring, buying or possessing a meeting-house; for erecting a baptismal basin, font, or bath; for charnel, altar, table, leavened or unleavened bread, chalice, cup, or tankard; and many other things of equal value." Having fully demonstrated the existence of the law of expediency and its place in the church we would observe that the elders that rule well, must keep within the realm of their ruling power. It is always expedient, as well as divine, that the church composed of elders, deacons, and brethren should consult together on all matters affecting the interest of the church. Every question of expediency should be settled by vote of the church and the elders should say amen. The brethren in majority should gracefully and in the spirit of Christ submit themselves to the voice of the whole church, and so fulfil the law of love. The elders that rule well will so advise, and teach the brethren to be thus submissive, telling each, to esteem others better than themselves. The whole church could then move systematically to the full end of any undertaking without a jar. No brother or sister, elder or deacon, should allow any foot of bitterness to find a lodgment in his or her heart, because the church thinks different from them on any particular matter. If our brethren everywhere could realize the charity that thinking no evil of their brethren, it would save many heart burnings and a world of trouble in our churches.

## FAITH.

Much has been said about faith, great-faith, little-faith, saving-faith, etc. but there is a faith that is seldom spoken of, and in my humble estimation sadly neglected, for although I am not aware that it is mentioned in so many words in the scriptures, it is but the natural outcome of a genuine faith in Christ, whose teachings always pointed in that direction. I refer to the faith we should have in the good intentions of our fellow creatures, and especially those of the household of faith. We find a great lack of this faith in regard to missionary work; indeed our people have so little, that they rarely think it safe to invest any money in the service of the Lord, lest some brother or sister through whose hands it must pass, should appropriate some of it. To be sure they would deny harboring the thought that any of them were thieves, but what else do their suspicious amount to when sifted down? At the same time they know that if any sum of money were left in their hands for any purpose they would not rest until it had been forwarded to its destination; and they not then have faith in other people's honesty as well as their own? We have great need to exercise this faith in our church relationship, for surely we ought to give every one who stands up and confesses Christ the credit of being honest and pure in their motives, in fact have faith in their good intentions, even when appearances are somewhat damaging, for methinks 'twere better to suffer through over-much confidence than to injure both them and ourselves by base surmises. I remember being told once when very young, that I was nothing but a hypocrite, and that too when I was conscious of no wrong-doing, but appearances were against me, and my elders had very little faith. Ah, me! How the cruel words rankled and burned in the sensitive heart till it went to the gentler arms of Jesus who was ever kind and considerate, even to doubting Thomas and impulsive Peter. We sometimes hear people say that they never had any inclination to do this and so, and therefore they have no faith in another who under great stress of circumstances probably has made a flattering mistake. No inclination for truth! What vector then in refraining from that which you have no inclination to do? What right then to judge? Can a man who never tasted liquor have any idea of the intoxicating drunkard's maddening desire? The drunkard may exercise more self-denial in his efforts to overcome that evil vice, than a temperate man may in his whole life time. He may not succeed but we may believe he intends to, and while our faith in him will not hurt us even though it returns to us void, it may be a great help to him. We lose our faith in others too easily, and are too ready to cold-man, forgetting the Saviour's rebuke to those who would have stoned the woman, let us dear brothers and sisters in Christ, while contending earnestly for the faith which is in Christ Jesus our Lord endeavor to strengthen our faith in each other.

CANOE.

Trouble and perplexity drives me to prayer, and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble.—MELANCTHON.  
A little bit of love sometimes makes a happy home, but the lack of it will render home miserable.  
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